

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION'S
MUNICIPAL LAND USE PLAN COMMITTEE
Meeting Date: November 30, 2009

MINUTES

PRESENT: Karen Buckley, Chairman
Gene Maiorano, Chief, Salem Vol. Fire Dept.
Jim Savalle, Chief, Gardner Lake Vol. Fire Dept.
Don Bourdeau, Public Works Director/Fire Marshal
Jim Fogarty, Selectman
Dan Kung, Chairman, Board of Education
Mary Ann Chinatti, Town Planner/ZEO/WEO

ABSENT: Hugh E. McKenney, Chairman, Planning and Zoning Commission
Bob Appleby, Recreation Commission

GUESTS: Jim Choquette
Dinis Pimintel
Kevin Lyden, First Selectman
Robert Ross, Selectman

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Buckley called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

NEW BUSINESS

Future Planning: Board of Education

Dan Kung, along with Jim Choquette and Dinis Pimentel, both from the Board of Education's Town Building Committee, discussed the current thinking around the BOE's building/renovation planning. They provided a handout containing three parts—1) Salem School enrollment projections for the next ten years; 2) Timeline of work that was done to assess needs of school building, leading to establishment of the Town Building Committee; and 3) Educational Specifications to support design of project for renovation of Salem School. The handout is attached to these minutes.

Total school enrollment is projected to remain level for the next ten years, though the PK-4 population will grow slightly while the 5-8 population will decline, suggesting that after the next ten-year period enrollment will be higher than it is now. Current population of 490 students is less than the "highest-ever" population of 650 students. The "excess" will allow for swing space so that significant renovations can be made in certain areas of the building while the business of education is conducted in other parts.

The current school building has significant problems, particularly in the older sections, and these are outlined in detail in the handout. However, the problems are thought to be fixable and the Town Building Committee, after looking at a number of alternatives, has concluded that a renovations project

is the preferred path. The Town Building Committee is currently making its proposals to various forums in the town and is exploring funding options.

If this project continues on this path it is unlikely that a new school site, either on the Gadbois parcel or elsewhere, will be required in the next twenty-plus-year period. It will be important for the Municipal Land Use Plan Committee (MLUPC) to remain aware of the work of the Town Building Committee in case that projection changes.

Future Planning: Board of Selectmen

Present at the meeting were three former First Selectmen as well as newly-elected First Selectman Kevin Lyden. The MLUPC invited the Selectmen to reflect on past problems/desires/challenges that they have faced regarding the Town's properties. In the free-ranging discussion that followed, a number of items were discussed. None of these was presented for resolution at this meeting, but were to be included in a laundry list of ideas that will be input for the final update of the Municipal Land Use Plan. A list of those items follows, in no particular order, and with no particular priority. Further, they should be considered as ideas only, and not as decisions of the group.

- The original recommendations for uses of the Gadbois parcel should be reopened and considered as part of a strategic plan.
- The Town is paying for the Gadbois parcel, and people should be able to use it now.
- It would be nice to have a large pavilion on the Gadbois parcel which could be used for Farmers Markets, picnics, and other organized activities.
- The Public Works Department has run out of garage space and has no land on which to build more. Some valuable equipment is being left outdoors.
- The Recreation Commission needs room for the equipment required to maintain their facilities/grounds.
- The space in the "old vault" is inadequate for the type and volume of materials that are stored there.
- Because our public buildings have been built in the least-expensive ways possible, shortcuts have been taken which have resulted in longer-term pain—e.g. little storage, no basements, expensive maintenance.
- "Wait til it breaks" philosophy results in more cost over time. It would be better to have fully-functional maintenance plans.
- We lack the ability to move pedestrians between the school and the town buildings. It is too dangerous to have school children walk along Route 85. In inclement weather alternate paths cannot be used. Evacuation in the event of emergencies is a real problem. We need sidewalks or some other solution.
- We've outgrown the Town Office Building. Regaining the Probate Judge's office in 2011 will help a little but won't address the major problems.
- It would be nice to be able to use the second floor of the old section of the Town Hall, but doing so would require significant structural work.
- The addition to the current Town Hall was designed so that addition(s) could be made in the rear of the building. If such an addition were done it would be advisable to include a basement.
- The four-bay garage is in bad shape and needs work.
- The parking of school buses at the Town Hall site uses space that is sometimes needed for parking.
- It would be nice to have an all-purpose building on the Gadbois parcel that could be used as for community/senior/recreation activities. It could be built around a fire house but that wouldn't be necessary.

- If the overcrowding of the land and buildings at the Hartford Road locations proves unsolvable, some functions could be moved to a new facility on the Gadbois parcel—e.g. public works, trooper.
- If necessary to purchase other property, parts of the Gadbois parcel could be sold to raise the necessary funds.
- Water and sewer facilities at the Four Corners would help with Economic Development; however, this would be a major cost. The southern part of the Gadbois parcel could be a candidate for such facilities.
- The fire companies would like to build a training facility. This would help fulfill their own training requirement but could also be used by other towns.
 - Per Bob Ross, DHS will pay for building such a facility if the land is provided.
- It would be beneficial to the Town to have a few small fire facilities, such as a "one horse" station near Horse Pond, consisting of one engine, and feeder into horse pond, with a pump. This could be especially important if Route 85 is blocked, making it impossible to gain access to the area south of the Four Corners.

OLD BUSINESS

Chairman Buckley reviewed the Project Plan, Municipal Property Physical Assessment Form, and Functional Usefulness Assessment Form with those present.

NEXT STEPS

Chairman Buckley stated that Frank Abetti and Janet Griggs are scheduled for the January 12, 2010 meeting to discuss the Town Wide Survey conducted by the Plan of Conservation and Development Committee. Chairman Buckley will invite the EDC, through its Chairman, to attend one of our meetings.

She then stated that this Committee will not finish its charge by the January, 2010 date initially requested by Planning and Zoning Commission Chairman Hugh McKenney. She then scheduled two additional meetings: Tuesday, February 9, 2010, and Wednesday, February 24, 2010.

The location of the December 8, 2009 meeting, initially scheduled for the First Selectman's Assistant's office, has been changed. The new location is the Salem Volunteer Fire House.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

M/S/C (Maiorano/Fogarty) to approve the minutes of the October 7, 2009 meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

M/S/C (Maiorano/Fogarty) to adjourn at 9:52PM. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Buckley, Chairman, Municipal Land Use Committee